

Thursday November 29, 6:48 pm Eastern Time

## Panel Seeks Anti-Terror Technology

### Technology Task Force Hoping for New Anti-Terrorism Technologies

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WASHINGTON (AP) -- A federal task force seeking new technologies to fight terrorism has received more than 700 proposals since the Sept. 11 attacks, including an exciting idea from "some guy in his garage," Pentagon officials said Thursday.

The lone inventor's idea has so much potential it got passed to senior Pentagon officials and generals immediately, said Jeffrey David of the Pentagon office that develops anti-terrorism technology. He would not discuss the innovation in detail but said it was hard to categorize and would need some development and testing before it could be used.

Last month, the interagency Technical Support Working Group asked private industry for ideas to enhance the current anti-terrorism fight, from identifying suspects by voice prints to protecting soldiers in remote, hostile areas.

David said he expects to receive 10,000 to 20,000 ideas before the Dec. 23 deadline. The lone inventor hasn't been told how interested the Pentagon is in his idea, because the submission deadline has not passed, David said.

Despite complicated federal contracting rules and a relatively small \$70 million budget, the task force can bring new technologies to those who need them within a year, David said.

"If we get good ideas, we'll find a way to make it happen," David said at a Pentagon news briefing Thursday.

The Technical Support Working Group pays for research into anti-terrorism technologies for agencies across the federal government. The task force has asked Congress for another \$20 million in the wake of the Sept. 11 terror attacks, said John Reingruber, a Pentagon official who co-chairs the task force.

Reingruber and David cited several ideas the task force helped develop:

--Equipment kits to take samples for biological weapons testing that are more effective, cheaper and easier to use while wearing bulky protective gear. Some of the kits were used in recent anthrax investigations, David said.

--A new technology to detect fingerprints, developed in conjunction with Israel's military, used recently to identify an assassin and the culprit in the theft of material used in an

attempted attack on a commercial airplane, David said. He did not give any other details about the technology or the cases for which it was used.

--New ways to reinforce buildings to make them easier to survive an explosion. Some of the technologies had been used to renovate the part of the Pentagon hit by a hijacked airliner Sept. 11, lives probably were saved, David said. Some U.S. embassies used the new technologies as well in the aftermath of the 1998 embassy bombings in East Africa linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network.

The task force expects to spend between \$20 million and \$40 million to develop the proposed new technologies, with the first contracts to private firms available as early as February, Reingruber said.

The task force's October request for ideas stressed the need to develop ways to detect chemical or biological warfare agents before they can be released by terrorists. It set a goal of gaining a two-minute warning against several top-priority agents, including nerve gases, blister agents and bacteria, including anthrax and plague.

One priority is to detect and map underground and concealed cavities ``that may serve as secure havens for terrorists," David said. Another is to find ways to protect small military units deployed in remote areas, in rugged terrain in the presence of hostile forces, for extended periods.

Another priority is to develop a system for tracking an individual through multiple sequential video images or through multiple cameras. A related request is for a system to use voice prints to locate, track and correlate suspected terrorists and their associates.

On the Net:

- Technical Support Working Group: <http://www.tswg.gov/>